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Representing and Recording the Transformation of the Industrial Landscape in the North of England: A Reappraisal of Identity

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Aurore Caignet

1 Danny Boyle's staging of the industrial revolution at the 2012 London Olympics Opening Ceremony was a spectacle prone to reignite national pride by showcasing a defining historical moment before the eyes of the world. It started with an idyllic rural scene, with villagers peacefully playing and working amidst green hills and grazing animals, which was abruptly interrupted by the sound of drums. In a cloud of smoke, hundreds of workers came out of the earth, invading the hills and the land, stripping the grass off the fields, and factory owners started performing a mechanical choreography. As gigantic chimneys were sprouting up from the barren ground, the stadium was filled with smoke and seemed to be ablaze due to an orange glow akin to the fire of a kiln. Although this representation resembled a time-lapse, the experience of spectators witnessing mutations occurring before their eyes echoed that of contemporaries of the industrial revolution. Such a spectacular transformation from the pastoral to the industrial can elicit a reflection on identity and memory in relation to site and question the permanence of spatial inscriptions of industry. Despite ambivalent attitudes towards industrialism—and the dystopian undertones of the show—it would have seemed difficult to conceal this chapter of history by refusing to stage it. After all, the British landscape is dotted with remains of industry, especially the North of England. This is where the greatest number of vestiges from the industrial revolution can be found (Buchanan 404), which is why some remain vacant and derelict, and others have become ruins. However, many industrial buildings and

structures which have survived in the North are recognized as heritage sites and are protected as such.

2 This article investigates the role of visual artists in recording mutations of industrial landscapes, thereby inviting viewers, inhabitants and visitors to reconsider spaces marked by industry in the North of England. Depictions that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century captured a pessimistic mood in the face of adversity. If L.S. Lowry's industrial scenes came to encapsulate the industrial North, the latter was also immortalised over the course of the century by photographers such as Bill Brandt, Ian Berry, John Bulmer, Martin Parr and John Davies, whose work highlights—albeit in different ways and contexts—the role that the survival of industry in the landscape and in images plays in maintaining the identity and the memory of a place. Yet, one may wonder whether their depictions fostered a stereotypically desolate image of the industrial North or if they drew attention to more positive aspects, such as the cultural significance—and aesthetic value—of traces of industry. This article explores the ways visual artists have responded to the transformation of the landscape from industrial to post-industrial in particular. An analysis of representations of the industrial revolution and its effects, as well as images signalling the decline of industry, will bring to light an oscillation between permanence and change. This article also examines photographic representations of the North of England which contribute to the rehabilitation of the industrial built environment as a distinctive component of the territory's identity, before reflecting on post-industrial cities and their identity in relation to industrial heritage and urban regeneration.

Resisting or accepting change: permanence and mutation in the industrial North

3 When the impact of and the mutations derived from industrialism were represented in the visual arts, it was not unusual to resort to a dichotomy between the urban and the rural in distant views of industrial towns (Arscott 1988, 217). In *View of Bradford*, a vista painted by John Wilson Anderson (1798-1851) [**fig. 1**][1], the growing manufacturing town is contained by the surrounding countryside of the West Riding of Yorkshire, with cattle resting on the hills in the foreground. Industry is a discreet presence in the landscape: the numerous mill chimneys are barely discernible, the moors in the distance are unspoiled, and the romantic sky lends the whole scene an impression of grandeur. Bradford was depicted by Anderson in the 1820s, when the expression "industrial revolution" was used for the first time (Hobsbauwm 28) to describe a transformative process that had started in the second half of the eighteenth century, bringing about a wide range of technical, social and economical mutations and leading to the birth of industrial cities.

4 Fifty years later, representations of the capital of the wool industry reflected these changes and their effects on the landscape, as corroborated by *The City of Bradford*, a woodcut engraving reproduced in *The Illustrated London News* in September 1873 (Ayers 5), that is, the same year Bradford's Town Hall was completed. This architectural landmark is represented alongside with the Wool Exchange—opened in 1867—as both buildings symbolised the prosperity of the wool trade in Bradford, which is seen from a high vantage point. The presence of a quarry[2] in the foreground suggests that the textile industry was not the only flourishing industry in the area, and that urban

expansion and the construction of new textile mills—which relied on the extraction of stone—would eventually disfigure the surrounding hills. The invasion of the natural environment by industry is conjured up by the panoply of chimneys in the background. However, the gigantic industrial complex in the middle ground is the only structure bathed in sunlight, as if this engineering and architectural feat deserved to be put to the fore, hence the idea that such a representation does not necessarily constitute a rejection of modern industrialism.

5 Breathtaking beauty emanates from *The Heart of the West Riding* (1916) by Bradford-born painter Bertram Priestman (1868-1951) [**fig. 2**]. In this impressionistic dreamlike view of the West Riding of Yorkshire we can see a railway viaduct with a steam train, chimneys and factories, workers' cottages, all nestled in hilly surroundings. In the foreground, fields separate the viewer from the mills; from this viewpoint, in spite of the noticeable presence of industrial chimneys, it is the church spire which dominates the centre of the horizon. An impression of unity between nature and industry stems from this bucolic prospect in which the smoke merges with clouds in the bright sky. Yet, this early twentieth-century representation of a harmonious industrial landscape in the North of England betrays a feeling of nostalgia and may be read as a longing for an idealised past.

6 On the contrary, a sense of resignation mixed with celebration stems from L.S. Lowry's paintings, which illustrate the tremendous impact of industry in northern English towns and cities such as Salford and Manchester. In their article entitled *The English Landscape*, David Lowenthal and Hugh C. Prince argued that "just as they accommodate industrial artifacts to attractive rural landscapes, so the English find something potentially worthwhile in the dreariest wastelands" (1964, 346). Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976) was fascinated by the industrial North, as it was deemed worthy of representation despite being the antithesis of the English rural scenery. As he witnessed the gradual decline of industry in the region, notably from the 1950s onwards, Lowry depicted industrial settings and celebrated working-class culture and identity (Schmid 355-356). Many of his works were imaginary landscapes, images combining "factual as well as invented elements drawn from a variety of sources" (Royal Academy of Arts 9) inspired by places in and around Manchester.

7 In Lowry's 1952 *Industrial Landscape. Ashton-under-Lyne* [**fig. 3**], we see an industrial scene in a textile town near Manchester with a plethora of smoking stacks receding into the horizon, fading into a haze. In this sprawling townscape teeming with activity, people come and go in different directions. In his 1955 *Industrial Landscape* [**fig. 4**], human figures feature less prominently in the foreground and they are dwarfed by the surrounding environment and architectural elements. They seem to be trapped, since the main road lined with terraced houses only leads to the factories. In both panoramic views—which belong to a 1950s series dedicated to composite industrial scenes—an impression of multiplicity is derived from the representation of countless smoking chimneys, factories, and roads, as far as the eye can see. Lowry's panoramas would be hard to find in the post-industrial North of England; actually, only fragments remain, because "[t]he whole picture has long gone, consigned to history" (Sandling 8). His paintings epitomised the moment when these urban landscapes were about to disappear and later transformed. Indeed, following some severe downturns (which had started as early as the 1860s with the detrimental effects of the American Civil War on Lancashire's cotton industry, and were later aggravated by the disintegration of the

British Empire and direct competition from former colonies in textile manufacturing), and despite a brief post-war boom, efforts to modernise the region's cotton industry thanks to the 1959 Cotton Industry Act were not enough to avert its terminal decline.[3]

8 Photographers also recorded mutations witnessed in industrial towns and cities. A precursor to contemporary social documentary work (Kismaric 8), Bill Brandt (1904-1983) documented life in the North by visiting several industrial towns (Halifax, Newcastle, Sheffield, Jarrow) a year after the Jarrow Crusade (a march from Jarrow in North-East England to London took place in 1936 to protest against unemployment and destitution) (Hermanson 70). Bill Brandt investigated the social consequences of the economic depression that had resulted from the US stock market crash in 1929; already undermined by increasing foreign competition, British exports collapsed and the industrial output of Britain's traditional manufacturing industries declined, leading to mass unemployment and poverty in industrial areas. If the presence of children playing and running along the railway tracks infuses life into Brandt's black and white photograph *Halifax* (1937) [**fig. 5**] (the vanishing lines converge towards a smokeless chimney in the background, thereby conveying the impression that their future could be a bleak dead end). In the North, whether it is thriving or not, industry is king—as the crown-like top of the smokestacks in the distance suggests. An industrial chimney can be considered as the most iconic symbol of industry. Yet, as this important landmark for the identity of the North of England is usually sacrificed first, its destruction leads to the material erasure of the past, which hinders the preservation of collective memory (Halbwachs).

9 In the early twentieth century, smokestacks were perceived positively as they were standing for a flourishing economy, whilst smoke plumes were synonymous with industrial activity and, as such, they were a sign of prosperity (Mosley 87). A decrease in industrial production can be inferred from Brandt's photograph, since only one of the chimneys is releasing smoke. The same can be said about *Coal-Miners' Houses Without Windows to the Street* (1937) [**fig. 6**], a black and white photograph he took in the North East of England, and which depicts a brick building with doorways but no windows, and several chimneys in the background. The chiaroscuro printing technique (Kismaric 8) reinforces the dreariness of this uninviting environment in which one can feel "the absent presence of workers" (Strangleman 30). In fact, the rubble opposite the remaining windowless, lifeless miners' homes seems to hint at forthcoming changes. A dichotomy between permanence and change stems from Brandt's depiction in so far as only the means of production might survive, regardless of the fact that workers' housing is also constitutive of the identity of this place. The ephemeral existence of people and the illusion of durability fostered by the physical presence of industry are alluded to: "[...] the solidity of factories and tenements and steeples masked a fundamental impermanence; it obscured the forces that both created this world through investment and broke it apart by withdrawing investment" (Cowie 5).

10 One may wonder whether the depiction of deprived working-class environments played a role in justifying the post-war slum clearance responsible for the destruction of predominantly industrial communities. What is more, photographers who developed 1930s documentary in Britain came from middle-class backgrounds "[...] in which to serve others [...] was an expected duty" (Roberts 65), yet they did so by taking up photography as the Depression— which was a blow to Britain's imperial and industrial influence—had prevented them from working for the home or Colonial administration

(Edwards 17). Therefore, photographers from the South of England who sought to record squalid living and working conditions in the North may have imposed a condescending vision of northern working people. It could nonetheless be argued that some images highlighted the social and economic polarisation between the North and the South, whilst others could be used as "evidence of continuing class exploitation" (Roberts 64). If Brandt's photographic work came to define the 1930s and the industrial North in the national imagination, with some of his photographs having been used by photojournalistic magazine *Picture Post* to symbolise the decline of the nation (Delany 137), human suffering is only implicit in the two pictures analysed, which are dominated by buildings and industrial structures. They allow a reading that can be distanced from Mass-Observation's initial conception as "an anthropological survey of working-class life" (Roberts 62).[4]

11 Although both images illustrate the aestheticisation of desolate industrial settings plagued by uncertainty, the monumental smokestacks in Brandt's photographs—as well as in Lowry's paintings—are not only recognised as architectural landmarks and defining features of industrial landscapes, but they are also granted artistic legitimacy. According to historian Raphael Samuel, "the mere fact of preservation aestheticises [...]. The 'dark mills' no longer seem horror when they are exhibited as historical monuments [...]" (305). I argue that the visual preservation of industrial landscapes through artistic representation had the merit of drawing a positive attention to them, which could constitute a first step towards the conservation of what was later reassessed and constructed as industrial heritage.

Celebrating an identity and community defined by place, industry…and stereotypes

12 Instead of perceiving industrial buildings as being purely functional—and thus useless and disruptive once industry is gone—one should try to see their presence in the landscape in a more positive way. This is even more crucial since a sense of identity is derived from the built environment and memory is maintained and conveyed by space and traces of the past. According to sociologist John Urry, "[...] it is not merely that the object is historical, but that the object signifies the place and that if the object were to be demolished or substantially changed then that would signify a threat to the place itself" (156). The survival of industrial buildings depends on a change of perception and an acknowledgement of their significance not only as historic heritage, but also as a repository for memory. When the pressure group SAVE Britain's Heritage started its campaign for historic buildings in 1975 however, the historic significance of the industrial built environment was more likely to be recognised than its aesthetic value (Binney 11). A novel way of looking at industrial buildings, their inscription in the landscape and their potential beauty was thus required.

13 Several photographers contributed to the positive reassessment of industrial architecture. When photo-journalist John Bulmer (b. 1938) started to document the people and landscape of the North of England in the early 1960s, he became a pioneer of colour photography as, in those days, traditional social documentary photography used to be in black and white.[5] It was also unusual to represent the industrial North in colour. Yet, thanks to the use of colour, the textile mills in Bulmer's photograph *Mills, Oldham,* 1965 [**fig. 7**] tend to appear less grim, especially since they might have been

captured "in subdued or fading light and after rain", hence the creation of "a gentle, almost pastel effect".[6] Industry is fenced in by gently rolling hills, thereby giving the image a pastoral aspect despite the predominance of industrial sites. It illustrates the contrasted reality of the North's identity both defined by its countryside and its eminently industrial urban centres; it is also at odds with the impression of doom and gloom found in stereotypical depictions of industrial landscapes.

14 Visually compelling depictions of these landscapes can also be derived from a certain grimness reinforced by cold and rainy weather, which tends to be specifically associated with the North of England (Wales 25). As Lowenthal and Prince put it, because of the moist atmosphere: "[l]andscapes are most often seen through a veil of haze [...] outlines are blurred, colours are softened, the whole appearance of things is more subtle, more mysterious, more romantic, than if seen under direct sunlight" (1964, 316). Clouds, fogs and smoke coalesce in Martin Parr (b. 1952)'s 1975 black and white photograph *Calder Valley near Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire* [**fig. 8**]. If nature prevails over industry, the latter is implicitly represented in the smoky atmosphere. In Bulmer's and Parr's photographs, it is this smoky atmosphere which participates in the aestheticisation of industrial landscapes. The art of photography can thus show this by-product of industry in a new light, as a potential tool for the creation of dreamlike representations for instance. Martin Parr also experimented with the subtle interplay between light and rain by photographing industrial landscapes at night. A picturesque black and white photograph of Hebden Bridge[7] exemplifies the interdependence of workers and industry: the factory is the beating heart of a community which lives amongst industrial production sites and whose identity is determined by the physical manifestations of industry. Although this picture was shot at night, it is infused with light and liveliness, and conveys an impression of warmth and softness.

15 Industry is also depicted as being part and parcel of a town and community in a black and white photograph taken by Ian Berry (b. 1934) and entitled *Consett, County Durham, 1974* [**fig. 9**]. After having spent several years abroad, Ian Berry returned to England and documented daily life in the country in the late 1960s and 1970s, an exploration which led to the publication of *The English* in 1978. In the background, a factory blends into its surroundings: its silhouette seems to fuse with that of the trees, with smoke taking on the appearance of foliage. Its presence is not questioned, as it has always been there for these children. Lowenthal claims that "memory and history only pin-point certain things as relics; the rest of what lies around us seems simply present, suggesting nothing past" (1998, 238). Just as daily interaction with industrial activity explains why the children in the picture do not pay attention to the factory, habit can hinder people's awareness of the historic, cultural or aesthetic value of industrial buildings. Last but not least, the movement of the children heading towards the right-hand side of the picture could evoke the way we deal with remains of the past in post-industrial cities: although one of them is looking back, the other two are looking ahead, which can be indicative of a forward-looking attitude.

16 Distinctive depictions of everyday life in the North pepper Ian Berry's photographic documentation. Familiar motifs such as rows of terraced streets, cobbles and laundry drying on clothes lines, are part of the composition of *Ashington, Northumberland* [**fig. 10**], a black and white photograph of colliery workers' housing in 1974, back when the mining industry was still thriving. A chiaroscuro effect accentuates the darkness of the buildings in opposition to the whiteness of the clothes and sky; moreover, succession

and endless repetition induce the sense of being in a confined environment or in a tight community. The vanishing lines lead towards the silhouette of a woman, highlighting the human dimension at the heart of industrial society. This aestheticised depiction of the everyday in an ordinary industrial neighbourhood evokes a routine, a life revolving around the mines in a typically Northern town in which distinctive working-class characteristics are reminiscent of a "sense of place" (Lynch 1981, 131). Berry captured ordinary lives interwoven with industry when the heritage[8] field was widening its scope to include monuments of the industrial revolution, which allowed for the rehabilitation of a more "ordinary" type of heritage (Wright 253).

17 Without compromising the aesthetic dimension, some photographers used self-derision and humour, which is often associated with the North (Jewell 2; Russell 156), in order to celebrate it through the representation of specifically Northern traits such as bad weather and industrial scenery. John Bulmer's depiction of a Mancunian street in the late 1970s relies on an incongruous juxtaposition and on stereotypes. The photograph *Trafford Park, 1976* [**fig. 11**] is divided into two parts: one represents a billboard featuring an advertisement for a cereal brand, in which a traditional English village is represented in a beautiful rural landscape akin to that of the Cotswolds; its main street seems to be glistening with rain water, whilst rays of sunlight pierce through the clouds. The advertisement's slogan is "Here comes the sun", which evokes the 1969 song by The Beatles in which George Harrison sang "it seems like years since it's been clear". The second part of the photograph shows the street where the billboard is set. Coincidentally, there is a dichotomy between the advertisement and the neighbourhood, which is resolutely industrial in character, with brick houses lining up a cobbled street leading to a factory and its smoking chimney. Yet, industrial activity is so limited that the thick black smoke plumes released by this single chimney—which take on the appearance of dark clouds—do not even obstruct the blue skies. Regardless of the humorous tone which stems from this photograph, the latter puts to the fore conflicting identities reminiscent of a North-South divide in England echoing oppositions between the urban and the rural, and between industry and nature.

18 To refer to unfortunate weather conditions and smoke pollution in representations of the industrial North demonstrates a proud assertion of northern identity derived from what can be seen as an uninviting environment and challenging living conditions, especially in bad weather. In his tellingly entitled "Bad Weather" series, dedicated to this national obsession, Martin Parr also played with clichés and incongruity, such as in a black and white photograph of Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire (*Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire*, March 1980) [**fig. 12**]. It depicts an industrial townscape pervaded with a haziness caused by rain and fog. A woman walking up the street with an umbrella—she is the only human being in sight—embodies the resilience of the human spirit amidst such dreariness. On the left-hand side of the image stands a billboard displaying an advertisement. It could be an image of Monument Valley, on the Arizona-Utah border in America. Therefore, this iconic representation of the arid Far West is the antithesis of 1980 Northern England as one can draw a parallel between these natural monuments and the surviving chimneys in Slaithwaite. Indeed, they are man-made monuments which have come to symbolise a disappearing industrial society.

Industrial heritage and urban regeneration in post-industrial cities: a redefinition of identity?

19 Whilst inner city clearance schemes of the 1960s and 1970s had consisted in the demolition of overcrowded slums, small businesses and factories in major British cities, [9] urban programmes that emerged in the following decade were aimed at regenerating city centres that bore the scars of deindustrialisation, ultimately leading to the "urban renaissance" discourse that gained momentum in post-industrial cities in the late 1990s (Tallon 4). Former industrial districts were abandoned and factories were left to rot, before urban regeneration projects took into account the re-use potential of industrial buildings—or the new opportunities derived from their demolition—often at the expense of the historic heritage and identity they carried with them. Urban regeneration was a means to transform the physical appearance of deindustrialised cities and improve their image and reputation in order to attract investment and develop service industries—as well as the leisure and creative industries, for instance—to compensate for the decline of the manufacturing sector (Bianchini, Parkinson 208). As a result, reinventing the image of former industrial cities in the North could be synonymous with a redefinition of identity in which industrial heritage tended to play a minor role.

20 Admittedly, it would be neither possible nor reasonable to try and conserve every single industrial building; as Kevin Lynch suggests, "we dispose of physical evidences of the past for the same reason that we forget" (1972, 36). However, the destruction of the built environment is prone to generate "[...] a dislocation and sense of loss [which] can break down the pride and respect that ordinary citizens may have in their hometown" (Binney 25). This awareness of the correlation between places and identity is likely to grow in the midst of turmoil and rising uncertainties, which explains why the 1980s corresponded with the development of the "heritage industry" (Hewison)—a "preservation mania", in the words of Samuel (139)—fostered by a sense of nostalgia for the nation's past achievements and reinforced by a Conservative government which promoted traditional values.[10] This does not alter the fact that, once preserved and repurposed, industrial buildings can become "cultural tools of remembrance and commemoration" (Smith, Campbell 10) that act as a shield against amnesia.

21 Their presence in the post-industrial city is nonetheless problematic when they are disused. This issue, which is intertwined with that of conservation, memory and identity in the context of urban regeneration, is reflected in John Davies's work. In the 1980s, Davies (b. 1949) became interested in "the architectural remnants of post-industrial England" (Kismaric 13) and was commissioned in 1985 to do a photographic survey of the quickly vanishing textile industry around Greater Manchester and Lancashire (Davies 2013). His black and white photographs of industrial and urban landscapes in the North of England and the South of Wales were compiled in a book entitled *A Green and Pleasant Land*, in reference to William Blake's poem *Jerusalem*. They depict a landscape which is constantly changing, and "[...] where the remnants of multiple constructions are simultaneously mutated by the present and haunted by the past" (Davies 1987). To use Gabriel Gee's explanation, "[b]y 1985 Davies was unveiling not only the dilapidation and the uncertainty surrounding the former industrial cities but also the seeds of change emerging from within" (2017, 58).

22 In the 1985 black and white photograph *Monton Mill by the Bridgewater Canal, Eccles, Greater Manchester* (1985) [**fig. 13**], the canal is disused, the road equally lacks traffic, and the mill the viewer faces at eye level has been left empty, as corroborated by inscriptions on its windows advertising storage units to let (Gee 2010, 332). Uncertainty prevails, as the industrial building is awaiting a reinterpretation. Indeed, "the crisis of purpose is also a crisis of meaning" (Davies 1987). Like the trajectory of the canal and road, passing by the mill, the owners have lacked long-term vision and seem to have missed an opportunity to guarantee the survival of a representative of industrial heritage. The spatial impact of deindustrialisation in a twenty-year interval[11] is revealed in a second photograph taken in the same spot: if the church in the background has survived, the industrial site has been erased, allowing for *ex nihilo* residential construction and, probably, the promotion of waterside living. The juxtaposition of the "before" and "after" shots questions, in the words of John Davies, "our collective responsibility in shaping the environments in which we live".[12] It is redolent of an identity crisis, linked to a desire to get rid of the grimy image of industry in metropolitan centres by eradicating some of its testimonies.

23 As Doreen Massey argues, "the identity of places [...] is always in that sense temporary, uncertain, and in process" (190). Some of Davies' photographs illustrate the mutability of identity by highlighting a tension between the safeguarding of traces of the industrial past, in an attempt to preserve collective memory, and the need to go forward, which induces a more or less radical transformation of former industrial landscapes. This is striking when considering photographs taken by Davies around Manchester in 2013, which he juxtaposed with some of L.S. Lowry's paintings. This juxtaposition, which pays tribute to Lowry's industrial scenes, "reveals how neither medium can capture time; they can only point to the impossibility of reclaiming an irretrievable past" (Howard). Davies showed the transfiguration power of urban regeneration in the post-industrial city. One may also see his photographs as part of a memorialization process, as a way "to connect to something so recently lost" (Strangleman 29). As illustrated by the photograph *Jersey Street Mill, Ancoats*, a few mills have escaped demolition in regenerated Ancoats (John Davies, *Jersey Street Mill, Ancoats*, 2013 [**fig. 14**]; L.S. Lowry, *Mill Scene*, 1971 [**fig. 15**]), a conservation area on the fringe of Manchester's city centre which was the first industrial suburb in the world. In 2013, their purpose remained uncertain in this district which had lost its community, its liveliness, its *raison d'être*. Although it is seemingly industrial in character, a closer look at the line of people walking in the same direction confirms the mutation of northern England's society and hints at the gentrification of former industrial areas.

24 Davies' *Old Mills, Manchester* (2013) points to the resilience of industrial heritage into a twenty-first century city, as the architecture of new buildings echoes that of former manufactures. Unlike Lowry's painting *Saturday Afternoon* (oil on canvas, 45.7x61 cm, 1941), in which hundreds of figures walk and play on what seems to be a playground with a mill or warehouse in the background, the urban landscape Davies immortalised is entirely devoid of human figures. It is dominated by a derelict factory stuck in between a new apartment block and what could be brownfield land waiting for redevelopment. The destruction of the old to make way for the new is also perceptible in Lowry's painting: people are playing on what is left of former terraced streets, as traces remain of the demolished houses and the walls of those that remain lack windows. They act as reminders of attempts to clear dense and insalubrious Victorian

era housing in the 1930s—industrial buildings were associated with "Dickensian squalor" (Samuel 124)—in the hope that those symbols of social destitution and exploitation would also be erased from memory.

25 If both images bring to light the endurance of an industrial identity despite attempts at transforming formerly industrial cities, Davies's photograph demonstrates the conflict at play in their regeneration. On the one hand, efforts might be made towards the retention of an industrial typology for contemporary architecture to facilitate its insertion into the surviving historic environment. On the other hand, a disregard towards industrial heritage and its reuse potential might still exist, if one considers that the industrial remnants in the middle ground can be perceived as eyesores in a neighbourhood undergoing regeneration and as impediments to the attraction of new residents and businesses. In reality, the image shows the moment before the mill was rehabilitated and converted to new uses.[13] One can argue that Davies's picture suggests a celebration of industrial architecture and an acknowledgment of the opportunities this type of building may represent, as much as it shows the temptation to erase traces of the past or to operate a rigorous selection of what should be preserved to meet contemporary needs. Therefore, reminders of the industrial past can seem paradoxically incongruous[14] in this part of the city considered as "the cradle of industrialisation" (Rose)—and in Manchester as a whole—as a result of a future-oriented "urban renaissance".

26 Old mills and other industrial remnants still give the landscape and cityscape of the North of England an industrial identity prone to fascinate and inspire artists, who are also keen to explore and renew the purpose of former industrial buildings. Since the 1970s, artistic communities have been developing their practice in vacant mills and warehouses, as they constitute affordable working spaces within cities (Gee 2013, 129). By reclaiming sites that had become redundant as a result of deindustrialisation, they were instrumental in highlighting the re-use potential of industrial buildings, thus setting the trend for their conversion for cultural, creative, residential, and commercial purposes in the following decades. Where they are no longer a tangible reality, however, they continue to survive as visual traces in artworks which can help prevent collective amnesia and highlight their cultural significance and aesthetic value.

27 As former industrial cities and their sites of memory are constantly being transformed and regenerated, their identity is redefined; there is also an underlying feeling of uncertainty in the face of past and future disruptions, which can influence how one sees and represents an ever-changing environment. Visual representations of northern industrial landscapes reflect ambivalent attitudes towards industry: they may express a resistance to change or an acceptance, if not a celebration, of the imprint of the industrial revolution on the landscape and its influence on northern identity. Some artists also contributed to a positive reappraisal of industrial scenery by seeking out beauty amidst a grimy environment or by playing with clichés and resorting to humour. Artistic depictions of the North of England reveal, and even emphasise, an engrained and distinct identity that is also linked to industrial heritage, and despite attempts at getting rid of it or refashioning it in the course of deindustrialisation, one is often led to stumble upon industrial vestiges, whether in real life or in art.

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https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/feb/02/john-bulmer-photograph-north-colour1965
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APPENDIXES

Figure 1: John Wilson Anderson, *View of Bradford* (1825, oil on canvas, 70x127 cm, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford Bradford Museums and Galleries, https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/view-of-bradford-23882, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 2: Bertram Priestman, *The Heart of the West Riding* (1916, oil on canvas, 115.5x183.5 cm, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-heart-of-the-west-riding-23274, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 3: Laurence Stephen Lowry, *Ashton-under-Lyne* (1952, oil on canvas, 115x152.5 cm, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/industrial-landscape-ashton-under-lyne-23204, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 4: Laurence Stephen Lowry, *Industrial Landscape* (1955, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 152.4 cm, Tate collections, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/l-s-lowry-1533, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 5: Bill Brandt, *Halifax* (1937, gelatin silver print, 34x28.9 cm, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/159815, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 6: Bill Brandt, *Coal-Miners' Houses Without Windows to the Street* (1937, gelatin silver print, 33.3x28.5 cm, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/73263/coal-miners-houses-without-windows-to-the-street, last accessed 30 October 2019).

Figure 7: John Bulmer, *Mills, Oldham* (1965, photograph).

Figure 8: Martin Parr, *Calder Valley, Near Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire* (1975, black and white photograph).

Figure 9: Ian Berry, *Consett, County Durham, 1974* (black and white photograph).

Figure 10: Ian Berry, *Ashington, Northumberland* (1974, black and white photograph).

Figure 11: John Bulmer, *Trafford Park, 1976* (black and white photograph).

Figure 12: Martin Parr, *Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire* (1980, black and white photograph).

Figure 13: John Davies, *Monton Mill by the Bridgewater Canal, Eccles, Greater Manchester* (1985, black and white photograph, 50x60 cm).

Figure 14: John Davies, *Jersey Street Mill, Ancoats* (2013, 50x60 cm).

Figure 15: Laurence Stephen Lowry, *Mill Scene* (1971, oil on board, 50.5x39 cm).

NOTES

1. For a list of the pictures commented on, see the end of this article.

2. Sandstone was extracted at the Spinkwell Quarry in Bradford and was used for the construction of buildings throughout the north of the country, such as Manchester Town Hall, which was completed in 1877 (Edensor 453).

3. Although the cotton-spinning industry of Greater Manchester reached a peak in the mid-1920s and concentrated 88% of all the looms in Lancashire, the next fifty years were characterised by trade depression (Farnie, Williams 17). Over the course of the 1960s, the number of workers employed in cotton nationwide fell by 69%. The collapse of the textile industry led to the closure of numerous mills throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Rose 66).

4. Created in 1937, the social research organisation Mass-Observation produced a literary and photographic archive of the everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain.

5. BBC Arts, "Life in Colour: Photojournalist John Bulmer's World View", 8 July 2015.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1Z5w2YMfFGrPrCDzxhxBhb3/life-in-colour-photojournalist-john-bulmers-world-view
(last accessed 12 October 2017)

6. The quote is by Bradford-born photographer Ian Beesley. Wainwright Martin, "John Bulmer: A Photographer who Captured the North's True Colours", *The Guardian*, 2 February 2010.
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/feb/02/john-bulmer-photograph-north-colour1965
(last accessed 12 October 2017)

7. *Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire*, February 1978. This picture is part of Parr's "Bad Weather" series depicting British and Irish life in the rain and snow during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

8. As the process of deindustrialisation was already underway in the 1970s, and the built environment was changing dramatically as a result of demolition, reconstruction and modernisation, attempts to preserve historic buildings—including industrial ones—materialised. "And no wonder, since the past is known, familiar, a possession in which we may feel secure" (Lynch 1972, 29).

9. Christopher Booker, "Shoring Up Planning Disaster", *The Spectator*, 2 October 1976, 15.
http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/2nd-october-1976/15/shoring-up-planning-disaster
(last accessed 5 May 2016)

10. In 1983, the Conservatives passed a National Heritage Act, which established English Heritage, and which was seen as an attempt to capitalise on "nostalgia's profitability" (Lowenthal 1985, 4)

by preserving, reshaping and using traces of the past to meet present needs (Hewison 99). As the heritage industry in Britain was criticised by a number of academics, "[...] the word 'heritage' has taken on an uneasy association with conservative tendencies" (Smith, Campbell 4). The heritage craze of the 1980s was not an entirely new phenomenon: there were calls for the preservation of landscapes and buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century, mainly in opposition to the dramatic changes brought about by urbanisation and industrialisation (Wright 44).

11. *Site of Monton Mill, Eccles*, 1986 & 2003, Shrinking Cities group exhibition, 16 November 2007-26 January 2008, "Shrinking Cities 2008".
http://www.johndavies.uk.com/aexh2008.htm
(last accessed 12 March 2017)

12. John Davies, « Metropoli Project »:
http://www.johndavies.uk.com/metropoli.htm
(last accessed 12 January 2017).

13. The disused textile mill photographed by Davies is located in an area which used to be part of Ancoats and has been rebranded "New Islington" as part of a major redevelopment scheme. In 2018, the redeveloped mill housed offices and was surrounded by new properties and construction sites.

14. This remark echoes that of historian and journalist A.J.P. Taylor, who condemned the demolition of industrial vestiges in Manchester in the 1970s: "The few factory chimneys stand up like Egyptian obelisks, as much out of place as Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment in London". A.J.P. Taylor, "Made in Manchester", *The Listener*, 16 September 1976.

ABSTRACTS

This article highlights the role of visual artists in recording the mutations of a landscape that became industrial and urban. From the late eigteenth century and early nineteenth century onwards the development and the effects of the industrial revolution were starting to be depicted and early representations reflected a celebratory mood or already expressed a degree of fear and anxiety. A century later, L.S. Lowry's cityscapes captured an ambivalent image of the industrial North of England. His archetypal industrial landscapes—part real, part imaginary—met with success as traces of industry he had represented were vanishing as a result of deindustrialisation and, later, of urban regeneration. Industrial remnants found across the North, such as in Lancashire and West Yorkshire, would later be immortalised by photographers whose representations showed how their presence in the landscape conveys a sense of place whilst maintaining collective identity and memory. Whether they have been preserved as heritage or have simply survived as ruins, mills and chimneys give the landscape and cityscape their historic identity, despite attempts at reshaping them or "de-industrialising" them in post-industrial cities. Yet, one may wonder whether artistic representations of industrial landscapes foster a stereotypically desolate vision of the industrial North or if they draw attention to the aesthetic and historic value of traces of industry, and highlight a reassessment of this type of heritage in relation to the preservation of an identity that may also be at odds with its industrial connection.

Cet article cherche à mettre en évidence le rôle des artistes visuels dans la représentation des mutations d'un paysage devenu industriel et urbain. À partir de la fin du XVIII^{e} siècle et du début

du XIX^e siècle, le développement de la révolution industrielle et ses effets commencent à faire l'objet de représentations qui acceptent, voire célèbrent, ces changements ou qui expriment un sentiment de peur et d'inquiétude. Environ un siècle plus tard, les paysages de L.S. Lowry proposaient une image ambivalente du Nord industriel anglais. En partie réels et imaginaires, ses archétypes du paysage industriel sont de plus en plus appréciés à mesure que disparaissent les traces de l'industrie, conséquence de la désindustrialisation, puis de la régénération urbaine. Les vestiges industriels encore présents dans le Nord, comme dans le Lancashire et l'Ouest du Yorkshire, ont aussi été immortalisés par des photographes dont les représentations démontrent combien leur présence dans le paysage est garant de l'esprit des lieux et sert de support à l'identité et à la mémoire collectives. Qu'elles soient préservées en tant que patrimoine ou qu'elles survivent en tant que ruines, les anciennes usines et leurs cheminées donnent aux paysages industriels et urbains leur identité historique en dépit de tentatives menées pour les refaçonner et les désindustrialiser dans les villes post-industrielles. Néanmoins, se pose la question de savoir si les représentations artistiques du paysage industriel renvoient une vision stéréotypée d'un Nord industriel au paysage désolé ou si elles mettent en évidence la valeur esthétique et historique des traces de l'industrie ainsi qu'une réévaluation de ce type de patrimoine en lien avec la préservation d'une identité, laquelle peut être en décalage avec ses origines industrielles.

INDEX

Keywords: industrial landscape, heritage, identity, post-industrial city, deindustrialisation, urban regeneration
Mots-clés: paysage industriel, patrimoine, identité, ville post-industrielle, désindustrialisation, régénération urbaine

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